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TOWN OF BELMONT

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Belmont High School
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*****COMPUTER-AIDED*TRANSCRIPTION*****

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14 MITT ROMNEY: Hi, I'm Mitt Romney. I
15 live in Belmont.

16 I stand, and I'd also speak in favor
17 of a tall steeple, steeples for my church, and in
18 the future I'm going to stand in this room for any
19 steeple of any church that wants to be built in
20 this Town, because I believe this Town and this
21 State, this Commonwealth, and this nation needs
22 more steeples, not less steeples, pointing
23 symbolically to heaven, where I think the source
24 of our blessings and the source of many of our

1 questions come from.

2 Now, last week some of us put an ad in
3 the Belmont Citizen Herald, and we displayed six
4 other steeples there. They're taller in height
5 than the one that's shown here or about the same
6 size. Some were a little smaller. Some were
7 taller. Those I find out in my driving around are
8 not particularly hard to find.

9 I drove last week into work through
10 the Mass. Pike, and I left my area, and I started
11 driving, and I came to Plymouth Congregational
12 Church. It's a relatively modest 90 foot high
13 steeple. Then I went into Watertown, and I came
14 to Phillips Congregational Church. It's about
15 120 feet the way I tried to calculate it visually,
16 and then I came across several churches that are
17 built on the top of very tall hills, mountains
18 almost. One of them was the Perkins Chapel in
19 Watertown. That has a 171 foot high steeple.
20 Then I saw the United Church of Christ in Newton,
21 a 160 foot steeple. That's my estimate. Then my
22 favorite which is the Trinity Catholic Church in
23 Newton, 190 foot high steeple, lit beautifully in
24 the evening if you drive along the Pike on that

1 hill there.

2 Now, some of us assert that these
3 steeple's aren't relevant, because they were built
4 before Zoning Laws, and they're not in Belmont in
5 some cases. They're grandfathered. Modern zoning
6 they'd argue is designed to protect us against
7 things like that. In my view that's wrong.
8 Modern zoning is not designed to protect us from
9 steeple's. As a matter of fact, steeple's are what
10 make our communities beautiful and neighborly, and
11 they remind us of the things that are most
12 important to us. I can't imagine anyone thinks a
13 picturesque view of New England towns would be
14 more lovely if all the steeple's were lopped off at
15 the same height as chimneys.

16 Steeple's all around us are relevant in
17 my view. From the Nation's Founding Fathers to
18 the people who wrote our State Constitution to the
19 people who reiterated that in the Dover Amendment,
20 we are reminded that steeple's stand above Town
21 boundaries and Town zoning. The test of a
22 steeple's reasonableness, I would say, is not
23 bound by neighborhood or town boundary or zoning,
24 because it is a religious purpose, which is being

1 protected without restrictive boundary, because
2 religious purposes provide us with purpose, peace,
3 and perspective.

4 In my view, the notion should be
5 rejected that steeples on a house of God can stand
6 no taller than chimneys on the house of a man.

7 (Applause.)

8 MITT ROMNEY: Now, as I've been across
9 Belmont, and as I've driven across Massachusetts,
10 and throughout Boston, I see that tall steeples
11 stand above our homes and businesses everywhere.
12 In my view they remind us that we were brought
13 here and preserved in this land by province.

14 They typify our diversity representing
15 a host of faiths and a host of people. To some
16 they're like guideposts standing for constant
17 answers in a changing and troubling world. As
18 graffiti begins to corrupt our edifices, even in
19 Belmont, I've noticed, I celebrate this physical
20 witness of God's hand open to all his children.

21 I want more steeples. I'm not
22 concerned with the faith they represent.
23 Belmont's a Town of diversity and acceptance.
24 Each church and synagogue in my view is a

1 testament of our appreciation for our differences
2 in some things, but our unity in the recognition
3 of the family of mankind.

4 When our church was burned a few years
5 ago or several years ago, the Armenian Protestants
6 and the Catholics and the Congregationalists
7 invited us into their sanctuaries to use their
8 meetinghouse, which we did for a number of months,
9 and when Armenia was rocked by earthquake, a
10 friend of mine, a prominent member of our faith
11 contributed to build a cement factory in Armenia
12 that would go on to build 100,000 homes.

13 Nothing has brought home more the fact
14 that acts of love go across boundary of faith and
15 culture and even nation then the fact that I just
16 recently got a letter -- or read the letter in the
17 Belmont Citizen Herald from the local ministers in
18 this community supporting the building of this
19 temple.

20 I submit to the Board that these
21 steeple are reasonable. They're reasonable in
22 relationship to the other magnificent steeples in
23 our greater community and reasonable in the light
24 of he who they are designed and dedicated to help

1 us remember, and I respectfully petition the Board
2 to approve the steeples of my temple as it has
3 churches in the past, and I hope it will do, and
4 I will fight to do for other churches of other
5 faiths in the future.

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

